AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY JOINT TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ROOM 802, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2008, 10:00 A.M.

THOSE PRESENT:

Augusta-Richmond Co. Planning CommissionGA DOTGeorge PattyVonda EverettPaul DeCampMichael Keene

Lynn Russell

Juriah Lewis Lower Savannah COG
Amanda Seivers

City of Aiken Dana Luttrull

Sandra Korbelik

City of Augusta
Skip Grkovic

David Griffith

Diane Johnston

Heyward Johnson

Stephen Strohminger

Gerald Jefferson

CAC

Jim Bartley, Chairman FHWA

Willie Bell Cornelius Davis

Ray Griffin

Don Skinner Columbia County
Les Morton Ronnie Hutto

1. Consider approval of the minutes of the Joint Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Coordinating Committee meeting held on September 11, 2008.

CAC – Mr. Griffin moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Skinner seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mr. Hutto moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Lewis seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

- 2. Consider recommending an amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program as follows:
 - (a) Amend Work Element 4.13 Special Studies Request from Aiken County to add \$50,000 to hire a consultant to develop a system for a regional travel demand

model which among other things, is needed to include current, more accurate socioeconomic data for Aiken County.

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. Representatives from North Augusta, Aiken, Aiken County and Burnettown have been meeting for the past couple of months and have agreed a travel demand model needs to be established to complement the travel demand model from GA DOT. This will not replace the current model, but will complement it with the most current socioeconomic data to help for future planning purposes such as the for developing the Comprehensive Plan update and Land Management Regulations. An RFP will be sent out to hire the consultant to prepare the model. The cost is expected to be approximately \$75,000. Twenty five thousand is already programmed in the UPWP so an additional \$50,000 is needed.

Mr. Patty inquired if this would refine the process for developing the socioeconomic data or to run a separate model.

Mr. Strohminger stated it would refine the process and a separate model will also be run to help on the local level for planning purposes with new and large scale development. The model will be a more detailed model for the South Carolina portion of the ARTS.

CAC – Mr. Skinner moved to approve this amendment to the UPWP. Mr. Griffin seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC – Mr. Grkovic moved to approve this amendment to the UPWP. Mr. Hutto seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Consider approving draft FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program (see attached summary).

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. A summary of the draft UPWP was attached to the agenda. The summary includes a description of each work element and the total estimated budget for the program year that will begin July 1, 2009. The work elements mirror the work elements in the current year and cover transportation planning, transit planning air quality; and intermodal planning. The update of the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will be the top priority special study project in 2010. Even though the deadline for completing the LRTP update is not until September 2010, work will begin on the project 12 to 15 months prior to adoption. As part of the recertification of ARTS, recommendations were made for the following projects - updating the Bike and Pedestrian Plan that was prepared in 2002 and update the ITS Plan prepared in 2001. Special studies may be completed on these and other projects with any funds not committed to the LRTP update.

This is the first step in preparing the UPWP for the 2010 program year. The document will be submitted to the participating agencies for review late next month. Any comments received will be incorporated into the document and the final document will be submitted to the committees in February and presented to the Policy Committee for adoption in March 2009.

CAC – Mr. Griffin moved to approve the draft UPWP. Mr. Skinner seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mr. Hutto moved to approve the draft UPWP. Mr. Strohminger seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Update on Special Studies Projects:

(a) Regional Freight Study

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The consultant continues to work on this study. They are approximately 80 - 85% completed. The consultant continues to refine the list of freight needs and deficiencies and those have been documented and submitted for review. In addition, the consultant has been work on project prioritization criteria. The criteria will be used to establish priorities among the improvement projects. The contract for the project was extended by a couple of months, but the project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

As far as public and stakeholder involvement, the second public meeting was held on October 15, at the Julian Smith Casino. Approximately 15 people attended. A couple of days prior to the meeting there was an article in the local newspaper about establishing a freight truck route on part of Tobacco Road. This bought a few people to the meeting that might not have normally attended. The Project Steering Committee meet on September 5 with the consultant and the final Steering Committee meeting will be held next Thursday, November 20. The project is nearing completion and we are looking forward to adding freight improvement projects to the LRTP.

(b) APT Transit Development Plan

Mr. Lewis presented this item. The contract in the amount of \$133,000 was awarded to Wilbur Smith and Associates from Columbia SC to prepare the Transit Development Plan. The consultant has already begun collecting data. They will look at how transfers are currently done and if they can possibly be eliminated. A presentation will be made to the Public Service Committee next Tuesday, followed by a presentation to the entire Augusta Commission. A twelve-member project stakeholder committee includes representatives from the Planning Commission, Department of Labor, Paine College, and local government. As part of the study, transit surveys will be conducted during December. Two public information meetings will be held at a later date. The Transit Development Plan is scheduled to be completed by the end of May 2009.

(c) City of Aiken

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. \$150,000 was approved at the last meeting for the City of Aiken to hire a consultant to prepare corridor studies. The proposal has been submitted and a draft RFP and several maps are being prepared. This will then be submitted to SC DOT for review.

5. Update on Air Quality Initiatives

(a) Aiken County

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. Sustainable Skylines was introduced a couple meetings early. This is an initiative the EPA is sponsoring. A call for applications has been added to EPA's website for

\$250,000 in grants. Five grants will be awarded, ranging from \$50,000 to \$150,000, will be awarded nationwide. December 17 is the deadline for applying for a Sustainable Skylines grant.

(b) Richmond County

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The most recent stakeholders meeting was held at Misty Lake recreation center in North Augusta. Approximately 40-50 people attended. There was a lot of good input on activities that various entities are conducting to improve air quality both locally and at the state level. The handouts that are being distributed are from that meeting. The handouts are updates on the air quality situation presented by both GA EPD and SC DHEC. Based on the new ozone standard that went into effect March of this year, some portion of the study area will be designated as nonattainment for ozone within the next two years.

State environmental agencies will have to make recommendations to US EPA by March 2009 regarding ozone nonattainment areas. That kicks off an eight month process in which the state air quality agencies and EPA go back and forth with the potential boundaries for the nonattainment areas. In March 2010, EPA will make the final determination on the designation of nonattainment areas nationwide and what portion of the ARTS area will be nonattainment.

The reason some portion of the area would be designated nonattainment based on 06 - 08 data (see handouts), is that the ozone levels in both the GA and SC area for that period are above the standard. We don't know what the boundaries of the nonattainment area will be at this point. They look at several criteria in making that decision. We will keep you posted in regards to that particular issue.

As far as the regional air quality initiatives, we continue with the meetings and developing an action plan. It is important that the state air quality agencies have information from us that they can pass along to US EPA to show things we are doing locally and regionally to improve air quality regardless of the initiatives taking place at a the state and federal levels.

Mr. Patty stated the sanctions don't kick in until 2013. We could possibly be in attainment by that time. The area is still under the radar by the old standards.

Mrs. Korbelik asked how the monitoring stations work within the boundaries. Are their subareas in the boundaries? How are boundaries established?

There are criteria to determine boundaries. The state air quality agencies make the recommendations to establish the boundaries.

Mr. Grkovic asked if there is an air shed calculation involved and if so, where are those monitors? Greenville County has no monitor and therefore does not show up.

The locations in near the study area are in Jackson and Trenton on the SC side and on the GA side, there is one at the Medical College of Georgia, one on the south side of the City and then one is in Evans.

Mrs. Korbelik asked if we can recommend a boundary that includes both, are they averaged, or are we still designated because of Jackson's monitor? Or does Aiken want a monitor for itself?

DHEC will determine the boundaries based on a number of scenarios.

7. Status of Projects:

(a) Georgia Highways

Mrs. Everett presented this item. There are no major changes since the last update.

- SR 104 (Washington Road at Halali Farm Road (intersection improvement project) Right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to start in December.
- Flowing Wells Road The Value Engineering Study is complete and Columbia County is waiting on recommendations from this study.
- Alexander Drive Out of 57 parcels, 22 have been acquired, a total of 31 are pending options
 or condemnations, which leaves 3 or 4 from completely certifying the right-of-way for
 construction.
- Old Petersburg Road / Old Evans Road (widening project) all right-of-way activity has been suspended due to budget issues for transportation projects statewide.
- Wrightsboro Road all right-of-way activity has been suspended due to budget issues for transportation projects statewide.
- I-520 from Gordon Highway to US 1 (Deans Bridge Road) a public information meeting on this widening project was held on October 23, 2008. Nineteen (19) people attended.

(b) South Carolina Highways

There was no one available to present this item. A progress report was distributed to the committee members.

- Palmetto Parkway Phase 2 Mainline concrete paving began last week. Major construction continues to progress at the I-520 / I-20 / US 25 Interchange. Through the end of October, \$106 million has been expended on this project, which is 70% complete and 8% ahead of schedule
- Georgia Avenue Extension Construction is 80% complete. Work continues on signal installation and binder / surface paving. The expected November 2008 completion date has been extended due to utility conflicts.
- Silver Bluff Road (SC 3020) SC DOT has been requested to develop intersection improvements designs and present them to the ARTS Subcommittee. Randall Young will make this presentation at their next meeting on the 20th.

- East Buena Vista Avenue The project is on hold until the new scope is determined and accepted into ARTS Long Range Plan and TIP. Once approved, a new schedule will be developed.
- 5th Street Bridge Interchange Mabus Brothers Construction has been awarded the project and is in contract negotiations with SC DOT to begin work.
- 5th Street Bridge Interchange Project Proposals have been received for this project. The committee met and sent a summary of review of their recommendations to management and to the state Transportation Commission.
- Intersection Improvement Project (Dougherty Rd. @ Silver Bluff Rd.) Funds have been programmed for the addition of a right turn lane from NB Silver Bluff Road to EB Dougherty Road. Traffic Engineering will manage the project and develop a construction schedule for this project. It is anticipated that additional right-of-way will be needed to construct the project. Construction is expected to begin in late 2009.

(c) Augusta Public Transit

Mr. Johnson presented this item. We are preparing the 2009 operating budget for Augusta Public Transit. The Augusta Commission proposal recommends a service cut adjustment of approximately \$740,000 and generating another \$800,000 in revenue.

(d) Aiken County Transit

Mrs. Luttrull presented this item. Since the last meeting a telephone number has been added to the side of the buses. This will help with customer service and reduce confusion due to the fact that part of the transit service is contracted out. So when they call our service desk, the answers were slow in forthcoming since they had to look at a brochure to figure it out. The calls will now go to the dispatch office. The Mayor of Burnettown has agreed to pour the foundation and help with the cost of adding a bus shelter, Diesel fuel is \$4.50 a gallon which is a challenge for the budget. September ridership increased 29% over last year. Identification cards have been designed for riders with disabilities..

There has been no announcement on the MSAA grant awards. These grants will bring in much needed funds into the system. Fiscal year 2006 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funds were applied for before they lapsed. These funds will be used to purchase equipment for both the demandresponse and fixed route systems. Using the TEAM program software, an RFP will be issued in January 2009. Proposals will be due in March and equipment is expected to be in place by September 30th.

8. Issues and Concerns

(a) Prior -

At the last meeting, Mr. Johnson stated the barriers on the Bobby Jones ramp going west on I-20 are too high to see over when you are in a small car. This makes for a dangerous situation when vehicles want to merge.

This barrier has been lowered and the exit will be bigger when the construction is complete.

(b) **Current / New** – There were no current or new issues discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

George Patty Project Director